

ANGUS COUNCIL

ANGUS COUNCIL – 19 DECEMBER 2024

**HOUSING MEMBER OFFICER WORKING GROUP
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**REPORT BY ALISON SMITH, DIRECTOR OF VIBRANT COMMUNITIES AND
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH**

1. ABSTRACT

This report sets out the findings of the Housing Member Officer Working Group (MOWG) and requests Members to determine whether to establish a new Housing Committee. If Members determine to establish a Housing Committee, Council is asked to approve the proposed Terms of Reference and schedule of meetings, make appointments to the Committee and appoint a Convener and Vice Convener. Members are also asked to agree to appoint three tenant representatives to the Committee in a non-voting capacity in terms of a Scheme adopted by the Council.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

This report contributes to the following priorities contained within the Council Plan 2023-28.

Caring for our Place

- Ensure the provision of new houses in Angus
- Ensure delivery of affordable housing via our Strategic Housing Investment Plan
- Ensure that our housing estate is well maintained and invest in improvements

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council:-

- (i) note the recommendation of the MOWG to establish a new Housing Committee and determine whether to implement this recommendation;
- (ii) having determined recommendation (i) above, if the establishment of a new Housing Committee is approved, to also consider the following recommendations (iii) to (viii):
- (iii) agree the proposed Terms of Reference for the new Housing Committee as attached in Appendix 1 and delegate authority to the Director of Legal, Governance & Change to make the necessary amendments to the Council's Scheme of Governance, including the required amendment to Standing Orders;
- (iv) appoint members to the Housing Committee in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 31(3), and, so far as possible, to give effect to the principles of political balance as set out in Standing Order 31(4);
- (v) appoint a Convener and Vice-Convener of the Housing Committee from the members appointed to the Housing Committee in accordance with recommendation (iv) above;
- (vi) agree the proposed schedule of dates for the proposed new Housing Committee as attached in Appendix 2;
- (vii) agree that three tenant representatives be appointed to the Committee in a non-voting capacity in accordance with a Scheme adopted by the Council, attached at Appendix 3 of this Report; and
- (viii) delegate authority to the Housing Committee to approve the appointment of tenant representatives as and when the details of the nominees are known.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 At its meeting on 20 June 2024, Angus Council approved an amendment to a Motion declaring a Housing Emergency in Angus in light of the Scottish Government having declared a National Housing Emergency. Council also agreed to the establishment of a short-life Member Officer

Working Group (“MOWG”) to consider the establishment of a standalone Housing Committee, to oversee Angus Council’s Housing Strategy and Policy, and take urgent action to address the Housing Emergency and thereafter for the MOWG to bring forward recommendations for the establishment of this new Housing Committee to Full Council, including proposed Terms of Reference.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 The MOWG first met on 22 August 2024. The membership of the MOWG comprised Councillors Bell, Devine, Fotheringham, Meechan, Scott and Wann. Officer representation was provided by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth, the Service Leader Housing, the Director of Legal, Governance and Change, and the Head of Community Health and Care. The MOWG was supported by a Committee Officer. At its first meeting the MOWG appointed Councillor Devine as Chair.
- 5.2 The MOWG subsequently met on 31 October and 21 November 2024. The focus of the meetings was to consider the potential for a standalone Housing Committee, agree the proposed Terms of Reference for such a Committee and agree a preferred timescale for any new Committee to be introduced.
- 5.3 Having considered options including differing models namely a Housing Committee versus a Sub-Committee of an existing Committee or Committees, the MOWG recommends the establishment of a Housing Committee to fully reflect the importance of Housing and the need for regular scrutiny by elected members. The MOWG recommends that Council agrees to adopt this proposal.
- 5.4 Discussions in terms of the proposed Terms of Reference for a new Housing Committee centred on the current Terms of Reference for the Communities Committee and the Housing related matters that currently sit within the remit of Communities Committee, including in relation to Strategy and Policy. The MOWG was in agreement that all areas of work relating to Housing services which currently report to the Communities Committee should report to a new Housing Committee in future.
- 5.5 There were discussions regarding cross cutting themes relating to Housing such as Health and Poverty as well as the next Local Development Plan (LDP) however it was clarified that the new Committee could not consider reports relating to the LDP as this must report to Angus Council and could not consider specific Health related matters that are the responsibility of the Angus Integrated Joint Board.

6. PROPOSALS

- 6.1 As outlined above in paragraph 5.3, the MOWG recommends the establishment of a new Housing Committee.
- 6.2 The proposed Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 1.
- 6.3 Members are asked to appoint members to the Housing Committee in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 31(3), and, so far as possible, to give effect to the principles of political balance as set out in Standing Order 31(4), and thereafter to appoint a Convener and Vice Convener of the Committee.
- 6.4 Standing Order 31(3) provides that all Standing Committee of the Council will consist of 16 members. To comply with the provisions of Standing Order 31(4) and political balance, the allocation of places to the Housing Committee will be:
 - Administration Group – 7 members
 - Opposition Group – 6 members
 - Non-aligned members – 3 members
- 6.5 The MOWG was keen that any new governance structure be implemented as soon as practicable. A proposed schedule of meetings is attached at Appendix 2 for consideration and approval.
- 6.6 In addition, the MOWG have recommended that members appointed to the proposed new Housing Committee hold two development days annually with the Housing Leadership Team and/or wider staff group to review the Improvement Plan results and future actions.

- 6.7 At its meeting of 26 November 2024, the Communities Committee approved a new Tenant Participation Strategy (Report 348/24 refers). Representation was also made by tenants in support of more and better engagement with tenants to ensure their voices are heard and opinions and lived experience is reflected in decisions made on Housing related matters.
- 6.8 Officers have reviewed arrangements in other local authority areas where this information is available. Perth & Kinross Council and Aberdeenshire Council have 2 non-voting representatives from their Tenants and Residents Association or similar on their Housing Committee (or Committee with Housing remit) while Moray Council have 3 non-voting tenant representatives.
- 6.9 Following discussions on this matter, the MOWG recommend that three tenants be appointed to the Housing Committee in a non-voting capacity and in accordance with a Scheme adopted by the Council, provided in Appendix 3.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 It is noted that, subject to Council's determination regarding the roles of Convener and Vice Convener, there may be a financial implication related to remuneration for either or both of those roles. The Council's current remuneration structure (approved through Report 297/24 at the 26 September 2024 Special Council meeting) remunerates a Convener at £27,753 and a Vice Convener at £23,868. There is headroom within the current remuneration structure for 2 further Senior Councillor posts (11 currently, cap 13) and the £51,621 combined remuneration (currently £290,129, cap £346,895). There is also sufficient revenue budget provision to meet the increased cost of 2 further Senior Councillor posts c.f. basic grade Councillor remuneration (£8,931 in total).
- 7.2 Remuneration is only payable if the Convener or Vice Convener does not already receive remuneration for another role within Angus Council.
- 7.3 Whilst there are no identified direct financial implications on other revenue budgets, it is highlighted that establishing, and servicing, any new Committee will place additional demand on existing staff, particularly in Legal, Governance and Change, especially as a Committee Officer and Legal advisor will be required to attend this additional Committee, as well as preparing agendas and finalising reports.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are no specific risks arising from the recommendations of this Report.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

A screening Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and a full EIA is not required as the report is technical.

11. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment has been carried out within the EIA.

12. CONSULTATION

The Director of Finance and, the Director of Legal, Governance and Change have been consulted on the contents of this report.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are: (list them below)

REPORT AUTHOR: CLAIRE GREENHILL, SERVICE LEADER - HOUSING
EMAIL DETAILS: Communities@angus.gov.uk

Appendix 1 Proposed terms of Reference

Appendix 2- Proposed schedule of meetings

Appendix 3 Scheme relating to the appointment of Tenant Representatives